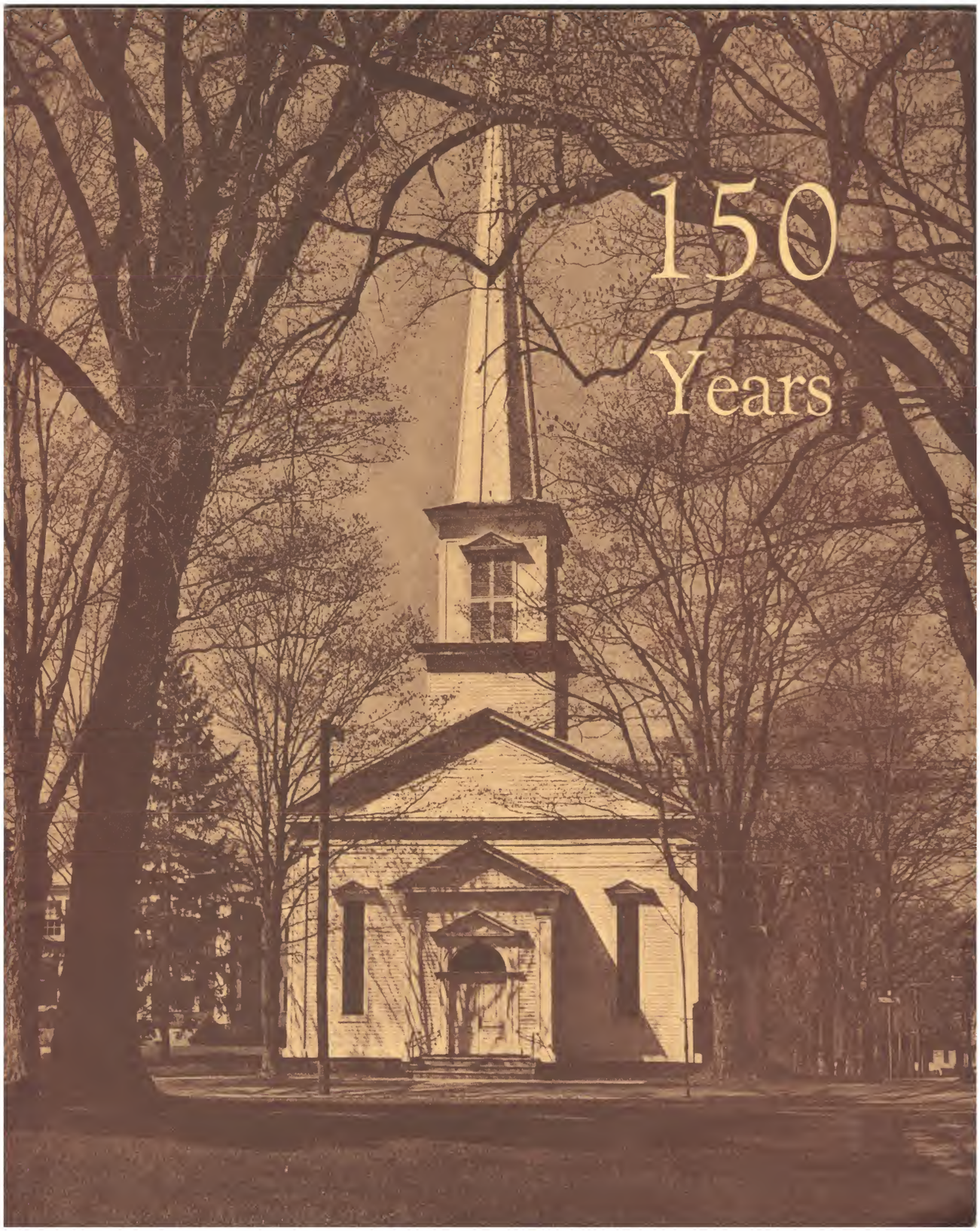

150
Years

Commemorating the

SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

of the

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

of

MEXICO, NEW YORK

1810 - 1960

July 30 - 31, 1960

This booklet is prepared in remembrance of all who have worshipped within these hallowed walls. So little of yesterday, or even of today, is actually recorded that time soon dims factual knowledge of heritage. May the words and pictures of this booklet help bond the past, present, and future by acquainting the members of today and tomorrow with a portion of their church heritage.

The Program

JULY 30, 1960

BANQUET . . . . . Wilcox Memorial House, 6:30 P.M.
Speakers . . . . . Hubert Mott
Winifred Roberts

JULY 31, 1960

MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE . . . . . 10:30 A.M.
Sermon . . . . . Rev. Spencer B. Smith
Assisting Pastors — Rev. Donald Roth
Rev. Max House
Rev. Charles Terry
Rev. Leon DeSmidt

FELLOWSHIP TEA Wilcox Memorial House, 3 to 5 P.M.

The Committee

General Chairmen . . . . . Mr. and Mrs. Earl C. Dexter
Advisor . . . . . Rev. Donald G. Roth

COMMITTEES

SESQUICENTENNIAL BOOKLET
Horace A. Backus
Mrs. Willard Fetcha
Richard E. Courtright

BANQUET
Mrs. Donald A. Dunn
Mrs. Harsey K. Leonard, Sr.
Ladies of New Haven Congregational Church

PROGRAM
Stephen T. Stanton

RESERVATIONS
Mrs. Edgar Wilmer

FELLOWSHIP TEA
Mrs. R. Austin Backus
Mrs. Arthur Moore
Mrs. Jay Backus

DEDICATION

". . . whosoever is of a willing heart,"

TO HAVE GREAT RICHES, great talent, or any special attribute or ability is something that has been wished for, at least, by almost every person. Some actually do attain some or all of these things either by nature, or by dint of much hard labor and sacrifice. How ever they are attained merits the praise and credit due to those who accomplish them. Thence some will use these special gifts for various ends: personal gain, pride, or perhaps just to prove a point. There are others who will use this ability to make themselves of greater service to God and fellow man, which, of course, should be the real reason for *any* effort.

But there is yet a greater quality that is often not included in the possession of special talent or ability, and that is the willingness to use it, provide it, and share it with others. In this case, however, the members of this church have been blessed beyond measure by the presence of Mrs. Glenn Buck in its midst, not only as organist, but by the many other actvities of the church and community to which she has given her strength and support. And this in addition to all the other "ordinary" things such as being a wife, mother, homemaker, teacher, and grandmother with all the trials and difficulties, joys and rewards that go with the living of an active life.

The lives that have been touched and thereby improved by an association with Fannie Buck are fairly well beyond the counting. And her influence will long continue through all who have known her; because to know her is to feel the great challenge of her example. When one thinks of the many who have come and gone: in the choir, the piano pupils, the people in other organizations in the village, the weddings, the funerals, the parties, and the many civic endeavors in which she has "*played*" a most important part, to say nothing of the time she has spent with rehearsals, it is almost appalling. And most of us must feel a little ashamed of the times we grumbled about being "put upon."

We, in this church, have had the good fortune to have her as our organist regularly now for some thirty-one years! And part of the time for eight or ten years before that. The job has been steady, the pay has been small, but the service has been faultless.

And so, Mrs. Buck, we ask your forgiveness if at times we have seemed to be ungrateful; if we have regarded you sometimes as some sort of "fixture" to be used as needed, or wanted. For it has been said so many times, and honestly, "What *would* we do without you?" Perhaps this is the reason that there has been no hesitancy on the part of anyone to say that yours has been and is the greatest service. And for this reason we gratefully, humbly, and affectionately dedicate this work to you.

LETTER OF GREETING

Dear Members and Friends
of the First Presbyterian Church:

When I became your pastor two years ago, it was proudly announced to me that in 1960 our church would celebrate its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary. The year 1960 is now with us and it is with pride and humility that I serve you as your pastor in this sesquicentennial year.

With pride as I have had called to my attention the many Christian Saints who have labored and worshiped in our church. People and pastors who gave their time to the Master, who stood up and were counted as being on the side of the Lord. Their memories stand before us, calling us to the responsibility of serving our community as Christians. When we pause to worship God may we remember them; when I step behind the pulpit to preach I pray that I would remember them.

So *it is* with pride that I serve you during this time and it should be with pride that you are living members of this congregation as we follow in the footsteps of those who served God well.

It is also with humility that I serve, praying always that I would measure up to the standards set by those pastors who have gone before me. With humility that I would see the need and vision the possibilities that God has for His Church in Mexico, New York.

As members of this church, envision the possibilities that God has for you to serve and act in His name. As we are proud of our Church and its past, may we all be humbled as God's children when we realize that much is to be done, much is to be wrought for Him who gave His all, even the life of His Son at Calvary that we would have life and have it abundantly. May we face the future years with a Vision of God's purpose for us, taking for our text, Proverbs 29:18: "*Where there is no Vision . . . the people perish.*"

Most sincerely,
Your Pastor,
DONALD G. ROTH

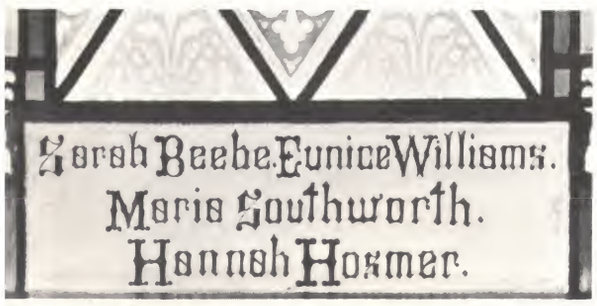
SEVEN WHO STARTED

Adapted from the book "Mexico, Mother of Towns"
Miss Elizabeth Simpson, *Author*

On August 27, 1810, seven women with fresh memories of New England's white churches and their tall spires facing village greens, met in a barn on Shubal Alfred's farm to form a religious society under the leadership of the Reverend Simon Waterman, a missionary sent out by the Connecticut Society. These seven mothers of the church were: Mrs. Shubal Alfred, Mrs. Alexander Beebe, Mrs. Thomas Hosmer, Mrs. Levi Matthews, Mrs. Josiah Southworth, Mrs. Thomas Wheeler, and Mrs. David Williams.

Lucinda Candee, a woman of 35, wife of Shubal Alfred, was born in East Litchfield Connecticut, June 27, 1775, and married at the age of 20 or 21. She had been living in her Mexico home in Lot 51 on the Oswego Road since 1807. So strict a Calvinist was Mrs. Alfred that she considered it a sin to attend services of any other denomination. Yet she was liberal enough to allow her children to dance, to the scandal of Sarah Beebe's daughter, Luna Morton. The photographs of both Mr. and Mrs. Alfred are to be seen in their own house as well as in the files of the local history collection.

Sarah Bowker Beebe was an older woman, having been born August 19, 1764. She was the daughter of Judge Joseph Bowker of Rutland, Vermont, known in his day as the *John Hancock* of his state, with a notable record of public service. When Sarah was 16 she became the wife of Alexander Beebe, a Revolutionary War soldier. Their first home was in Brandon, Vermont, but they migrated to Westmoreland and Verona, New York, and finally in 1807 to Mexico where they settled near Calvin Tiffany's, it is thought on the farm later owned by Sardius E. Ball and his daughter Clara Ball Burdick. We have Brainard Selby's word picture of Mr. and Mrs. Beebe mounted on one horse riding to meetings in the present village. At one time Mrs. Beebe had descendants in the church who also belonged



to the line of Mary Child Wheeler, two sisters, Olive Wheeler Johnson and Marcia Wheeler Gould and the latter's daughter, Mildred.

Hannah Everett Hosmer seems to have lived in this town but a short time, perhaps coming in 1806 with her son Sherman and settling with him at Prattville; but she was present at the age of 59 in the Alfred barn on that August day of 1810 to help organize a church. Four years later both she and her husband withdrew from membership in the church and probably returned at that time to their native state of Connecticut. Their daughter, Harriet Amelia, was the first president of the Foreign Missionary Society of the church, and their son, Sherman, represented them in the town until his death at the age of 91 in 1877.

Rebecca Walker Matthews probably walked to the meeting for the distance was only about three-quarters of a mile, coming from the farm in the southern part of Lot 40 on the Oswego Road, long owned by her son Solomon and grandson George P. Mrs. Matthews was only about 35 years old. Mr. and Mrs. Matthews had arrived in Mexico in 1807 and had lived in their covered wagon while their cabin was being built. Their sons Levi, Jr. and Solomon, and their families long continued in the church. Miss Lena Severance, granddaughter of Solomon, having been their last representative. The youngest daughter of Mrs. Matthews, Lydia Maria, served the church as the minister's wife, Mrs. Thomas A. Weed, from 1847 until 1870.

Miriam Hovey Southworth was 60 years old in 1810 but even so she may have walked to the meeting from the farm on Lot 119 between Colosse and Lambs Corners for family tradition says that she walked that distance via Calvin Tiffany's when there was no other road to the present village and she was much older than 60. After her husband's death she lived with her daughter, Alice Murdock, at the west corner of Church and Main Streets. It was her daughter Almeda who helped Maria Perkins conduct the Sabbath School in the mill schoolhouse on the site of the Old Eagle Tavern.

Mary Child was born in 1752 in Westminster, Massachusetts, and became the wife of Thomas Wheeler, a

Revolutionary War soldier, in 1772. They left their home in Templeton, Massachusetts in 1808 to accompany their son George Washington Wheeler to Mexico and to settle on his farm in Lot 99 south of the village. Within a few months his mother had lost this son and had induced a second son, Edmund, to bring his family to Mexico to take his brother's place. Edmund became one of the first Elders to be elected in 1818 when the church adopted the Presbyterian form of government. His son Charles served as Deacon for fifty years. Edmund's son George is represented by his only living descendant Elizabeth Simpson belonging to the fifth generation. Eight generations of the Child-Wheeler family have been identified with the church, three of these generations in direct descent from Edmund's oldest daughter Harriet Sherman, being Ethel Sherman Bradway (6th), her son Raymond (7th), and his boys, Donald and Thomas (8th). Guila Sherman King (7th) is still a member of the church though not living here now. In the same family Grace Sherman Partrick, now deceased, is followed by her daughter, Florence Partrick LaPoint (7th), whose four children: Mary Lu Partrick; Charles David, Edward Robert, and Donald Jay LaPoint, also represent the eighth generation of this family participating in the activities of this church.

Eunice Goss Williams the seventh matron who helped to organize the church, was the wife of David Williams and in 1810 she was 43 years old. Their first Mexico home was near Lambs Corners but they later lived nearer Quaker Mills. She has been represented in the church by children and grandchildren. The last of her family in the church was Kittie Alfred Sherman descendant of Lucinda Candee Alfred, and wife of William Sherman, another of the Mary Child Wheeler line.

For a year after this first meeting was held, no real organization could be formed because no woman could hold office. Finally, in 1811, enough husbands or sons or friends could become officers and the organization of the Presbyterian Church was completed—the realization of the dreams of seven stout-hearted women. We are reminded of what we owe them as we read their names on the stained glass windows on the north side of the church.

THE WILCOX MEMORIAL HOUSE

Warren S. Stone, D.D.

On a delightful summer day in 1926 Mr. Luzerne H. Wilcox broke ground, with a long-handled spade, for the erection of the Wilcox Memorial House. Thus, thirty-four years ago, began a new epoch in the life of The First Presbyterian Church of Mexico, New York.

It is my intention to give a brief summary of the events leading to the completion of the structure. The idea of the building, to be used as a parish house, originated in the mind of Dr. John Young, pastor of the church. When this idea was presented to Mr. Perley S. Wilcox of Rochester, New York, it won his hearty approval and support. The church is deeply grateful for the service rendered by Dr. Young in his careful attention to the manifold details so necessary to a building operation. Throughout the summer of 1926 the Wilcox Memorial House was in the process of construction. Near the end of August of that year these words were written, "The work on the parish house is advancing rapidly and every indication points to a completion of the building on or before December 15th as the contract suggests. Much of the material is on the ground, the excavation is completed, the foundation laid and on the south side and on the west end

the wall is erected a few feet in height." Early in December Mr. and Mrs. Perley S. Wilcox, the donors, went to Europe, expecting to return in February. All plans for the opening and dedication of the new building were then made for February 12, 1927.

However, Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox did not return as expected but stayed in Europe until late in May 1927. Therefore, the opening and dedication of the building were postponed until April 3, 1927. On that occasion the new edifice was formally opened for church activities. The Reverend David L. Roberts of Waterloo, New York, a former pastor of the church, officiated at the morning and evening services and preached the sermons. After morning worship, the Sunday School assembled in the church as usual and, following the singing of a hymn and prayer, all marched by way of Church Street into the new building, led by the pastor, Reverend John Young, Reverend David L. Roberts, Mr. Luzerne H. Wilcox, and the Superintendent, the whole school joining in singing *Onward Christian Soldiers.* On Tuesday evening, April 5th, a public reception was held in the Wilcox Memorial House.

It was not until Friday evening, July 1, 1927, when more than two hundred members of the church and congregation had assembled in the auditorium of the Wilcox Memorial House for a dinner, that Perley S. Wilcox officially and legally transferred the new edifice to The First Presbyterian Church of Mexico. The gift was accepted by R. Austin Backus, representing the congregation. Reverend John R. Woodcock of Syracuse, New York, represented the Presbytery of Syracuse and congratulated the church upon the beautiful and useful gift.

Mr. Wilcox gave expression to his hopes for the new structure in the following terms of the Deed of Conveyance; and in the words of the handsome bronze plaque mounted on the north wall of the entrance hall.

DEED OF CONVEYANCE

"In making this Conveyance I desire to express the wish that the said building, equipment and furnishings be used for the convenience and entertainment of all citizens and resident of the Village of Mexico and adjacent territory without discrimination subject, of course, to such rules as may be deemed necessary or advisable."

PERLEY S. WILCOX

Held in highest esteem by friends and associates, Perley S. Wilcox merits the continuous cooperation of The First Presbyterian Church in the fulfillment of his hopes for the Wilcox Memorial House.

THE PLAQUE

NOTE: *Mr. Wilcox endowed the Wilcox House with a Trust Fund of* $85,000 *at the time of his death in* 1953.

THE CHURCH SCHOOL

Nursery

To be able to tell you in detail of the early history of this Sunday School would be very gratifying, but no such records are available. Maybe our school received some impulse from the first Sunday School in Mexico, organized on Prattville Hill in 1814 by Amanda Brewster, and superintended by Jonathan Davis. Perhaps it was encouraged by the Sunday School organized by Almeda Southworth and Maria Perkins in the Mill School House, or possibly it was interested in promoting that school.

In the early days the habits of Sunday worship related the Sunday School with a social hour. The people met for morning worship an hour and a half before noon and for the second service of worship in mid-afternoon. Between these came the session of the Sunday School. After morning worship was over, and before Sunday School convened, the people met socially, eating the afternoon meal which had been brought from home, and discussing matters of common interest. The women clustered in the church, the men hovering about the yard and sheds.

There were Christmas gatherings, suppers, and festivals for the whole family. No doubt the wonderful picnics at the lake are remembered best of all. If you were young and small, you had to ride with your parents. If your behaviour increased with your stature, you won a much coveted promotion to those magnificent busses, in which you bumped your way content-

Front row, seated left to right: Elmore B. Stone, Superintendent; Glenn Phelps, Daniel Brown, Sandra Forbes, Alma Jane Aspinwall, Susie Eggleston, Douglas Eggleston, Gary Forbes, J. Arthur Magnuson, Junior Department; Miss Blanche Shumway, Primary Department. Second row: Stephen T. Stanton, Junior High Boys; Mrs. William Parthemore, Junior High Girls; Betsy Brown, Patsy Eggleston, Virell Fransecky, Dorothy Forbes, Wesley Aspinwall, Chris Traverse, Mrs. Robert L. Brown, Youth Budget Chairman; Mrs. Charles Burdick, Kindergarten. Back row: Kim Backus, Jeffrey Alnutt, Dennis DeLong, Debbie DeLong, Kathleen Jones, Donald Alnutt, Eileen Jacobson, Harry Backus, Donald Forbes, John Backus.

Kindergarten

edly, beguiling the hours with talk and song. The food was limitless, a swim in the lake, a swing in the grove, and boats on the creek, and the slow ride home in the cool of the day. There was something about that to make boys and girls feel that the Sunday School was about the best institution on earth.

In 1840 the School was under the direction of the strong personality of the "merchant prince" of Mexico, Peter Chandler. He is the first superintendent of whom we have knowledge. Following him, Deacon Samuel Smith, Deacon Charles Wheeler, Franklin Griffith, Joseph R. Stone, Dwight Foster, Charles E. Havens, and possibly others, have served the School at various times.

About the year 1861 a young Englishman, Henry Humphries by name, began work with the "Infant Class." For six years he devoted himself to this department, most ably assisted by Mrs. Samuel Stone and Dr. D. D. Becker. Nearly all the children were under ten years of age, and during this period the enrollment reached one hundred.

In the year 1867 (about) Mr. Humphries was elected Superintendent of the Sunday School. Coming to America with experience behind him in Sunday School work in England, with zeal he gave himself to fulfilling the responsibilities of this new office. Under his touch the School sprung to new life. He made the School interesting. He had a genius for new things. He told new stories. When a pupil had a birthday they were allowed to sit in the special small rocking chair. (Incidentally, the little birthday rocker has been repaired by Miss Arloine Backus and is again in use in this year of 1960.) Mr. Humphries was a very small, wiry man, slightly stooped in later years and he always wore a shawl. For fifty years Mr. Humphries worked with the children. Faithfully and skillfully he gave the Sunday School of his best. Than this, no man can do more.

The older people speak from experience or hearsay of classes taught by Emilus Williams, Deacon Smith, Charles Wheeler, Mrs. B.S. Stone, Dr. D.D. Becker, Cyrus Whitney, Mr. Dixon's and Mrs. Stowe's Bible classes.

Infant class superintendents: Miss Addie Herbert, Henry Humphries, Mrs. Samuel Stone, Dr. D.D. Becker, Mrs. B.S. Stone, Mrs. J.M. Hood, Mrs. W.H. Weed, Mrs. Edwin Baker, Mrs. W.H. Richardson, Mrs. Charles Gardner, Mrs. W.J. Collins, Mrs. A.N. Petersen, Mrs. O.S. Sampson, Mrs. E J. Parmelee, Mrs. C.H. Van Wie, Mrs. E.T. Stone, Mrs. A.M. Becker, and Miss Grace Becker.

Primary

The above information is adapted from "The Sunday School; Its History and Its Prospects" written by Rev. Warren S. Stone at the time of the Centennial Celebration, July 1910.

A few significant happenings in the Sunday School during the past fifty years are listed in the paragraphs below.

The erection of the Wilcox House in 1926 (*see story on page 8*) was the greatest single project in relation to the Sunday School during the past half-century. The Stone Room *(page 30)* also rates special note. There is not room to mention all the specific classes here (Miz pah and Open Door are mentioned elsewhere), suffice to say that the classes for all age groups through Senior High School have remained intact throughout the years.

The Christian Education Committee, to help guide

Juniors

Junior High Boys

Youth Budget

the course of the Sunday School and related activities, was formed in 1955 with Stephen T. Stanton serving continuously, to this date, as its chairman. No review of this past half-century would be complete without noting that Prof. Stanton has taught a Sunday School class regularly since August 1928; thirty-two years!

The Youth Budget Committee was organized in 1953 under the chairmanship of Mrs. Willard Fetcha, and she was succeeded as chairman in 1957 by Mrs. Robert Brown. Mrs. Donald Dunn has served continuously as its treasurer.

There are many others, people like Mr. Ward Castle who served so many years as secretary-treasurer of the Sunday School, that should be mentioned here. But the pages are lengthening and there are so many that deserve mention that it is difficult to know where to start or stop. Each made their contribution, and it is so marked in the life experience of each involved.

Today, the Sunday School meets first at the regular morning worship service, leaving the auditorium just before the sermon to convene their varied classes under the guidance of Superintendent Elmore B. Stone.

SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS FROM MR. HUMPHRIES THROUGH 1960:

Henry Humphries	1867-1910	Mrs. Avery Dimon	1947-1951
Arthur Becker	1911-1918	Richard Courtright	1951-1953
Mrs. Milo Graves	1918-1919	Mrs. Douglas Eggleston	1953-1954
R. Austin Backus	1920-1942	Edw. Hvitfelt–John Mayne	1955-1956
Mrs. Edgar Wilmer	1942-1944	Mrs. H.K. Leonard	1957-1958
Mrs. H.K. Leonard	1945-1947	Elmore Stone	1959-

Junior Choir

A Children's Sermon

OFFICERS—1960
President, Ernest Blanchard; Vice-President, Courtney Newstead; Secretary-Treasurer, Mrs. Ernest Blanchard

Front row, left to right: Miss Bessie Everts, Mrs. Frank Jones, Mrs. Ray Buck, Harry Stone, Mrs. Warren Stone, Mrs. Jonas Tompkins, Mrs. Harry Alnutt, Mrs. Captain Boyd, Mrs. Samuel Sade, Mrs. R. Austin Backus. Second row: Richard Courtright, Earl Everts, Mrs. Earl Everts, Mrs. Donald Roth, Rev. Roth, Rev. Warren Stone, Elwyn Ward, Harry Alnutt, Captain Boyd, Elmore Stone, R. Austin Backus. Third row: Mrs. Frank Everts, Charles Aspinwall, William Hartwell, Mrs. William Hartwell, Mrs. Charles Aspinwall, Mrs. Elmore Stone, Mrs. Earl Dexter, Mrs. Harsey Leonard, Sr., Mrs. Courtney Newstead, Mrs. Ernest Blanchard. Fourth row: Mrs. Richard Courtright, Mrs. Donald Dunn, Donald Dunn, Mrs. Willard Fetcha, Willard Fetcha, Ernest Blanchard, Earl Dexter, Mrs. Arthur Wright, Arthur Wright, Courtney Newstead.

THE MIZPAH CLASS

(Genesis 31:49) *Mr. and Mrs. Captain D. Boyd*

THE FIRST MEETING of all married people who were interested in a couples' class was held at the home of R. Austin Backus who was Sunday School Superintendent. This meeting was held November 2, 1923, and a continued meeting a week later. The first officers were: Glenn Buck, president; Mrs. Winfield Smith, vice-president; Mrs. William Elkins, secretary; Winfield Smith, treasurer.

Mrs. Earl Dexter and Mr. Stuart Lay were named a committee to think of a name. At the time Mr. Herkimer Clement was decorating the Dexter home. Mrs. Dexter was telling him about the new class and how we had to have a name for it. He said he once knew of a class called "Mizpah." Mr. Clement said the word meant "*welcome*." No authority has been found for that meaning. According to the dictionary, *Mizpah* means "*a beacon or watch-tower*." It dates back to the Old Testament times when Jacob was leaving Laban, his father-in-law. Laban built a pillar and heap of stones as a sign of everlasting peace between his family and Jacob's. To the Hebrews this became a sacred spot in Galeed. Whenever we repeat the Mizpah benediction we honor this sacred covenant between the two men. So later, when Mr. Lay asked Mrs. Dexter if she had any idea for a class name, she suggested "*Mizpah*." And Mizpah it was named. The class met for social meetings one evening the fourth week in each month and each Sunday morning for religious class. Mr. George Bullis was the teacher.

In October, 1930, Mrs. Floyd Jones made the motion that the class give $5.00 as a Mathematics award in the High School. This motion was carried, and we still make the award after 30 years. Later this action was amended by Mr. Bullis to read, "Resolved, that an annual prize of $5.00 be awarded by the Mizpah Class of The First Presbyterian Church to the Senior pupil having the highest standing in Mathematics during the High School course." Later yet we named this the George E. Bullis award.

In 1924 the project was started of visiting the County Home at Christmas time with entertainment and candy for the residents there. For many years, Dr. Leonard

was master of ceremonies on these occasions, with Mrs. Leonard packing the candy boxes.

August, 1933, the class celebrated its tenth anniversary at Pleasant Point when past presidents, secretaries and treasurers were honored.

In reminiscing we will mention just a few interesting things that have happened. October 26, 1934, a Hallowe'en party took place in the attic of R. Austin Backus' home. At that meeting Mr. Backus suggested that the class sponsor bringing the children from the Texas area up here for Church and Sunday School. Several of you will remember going to Texas on Sundays after these children. Twenty-five children from Texas are mentioned as being present at a morning service.

At the October 1934 meeting Mr. Bullis resigned as teacher of the class. He was made "Teacher Emeritus" for life, and Harry Stone became active teacher.

On October 20, 1937, we had a scavenger hunt for our Hallowe'en party. Mrs. Ray Buck and Hubert Smith were the first couple to secure all the necessary

A view in the Old Kitchen

articles. A "last year's bird nest" was the hardest to find, especially after dark.

April 20, 1938, the Mizpah Class entertained the Live Wire Class of the Methodist Church. Dinner was served under the direction of Mrs. Floyd Jones in the kitchen, and Mrs. Dexter in the dining room. Dr. Leonard was toastmaster, Mr. Oliver Elkins of Bath, N.Y., guest speaker. About 160 were present. For many years the Mizpah Class exchanged invitations with the Live Wire Class.

It was during the February 1940 meeting at the home of Mr. and Mrs. R. Austin Backus, that the fire alarm sounded and the garage of Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Smith was on fire. After the fire was extinguished the meeting continued and Mr. and Mrs. Smith showed pictures of their Florida trip.

During the war years our class officers were mostly women. Concerts, plays, food sales, and auctions were held to increase the treasury. The class helped establish a Day Room at Fort Ontario.

The 25th anniversary was celebrated October 18, 1948, with a banquet served in the Wilcox Memorial House by the Ladies Auxiliary of Grace Episcopal Church. There were 63 members present. Many former members returned for the occasion. A program was presented, arranged by Mrs. R. Austin Backus, Mrs. Earl C. Dexter and Mrs. Harsey K. Leonard. It was opened by group singing led by Mrs. Cecil Plumb. Dr. Harsey K. Leonard acted as toastmaster. Kenneth Murphy, president of the class, gave a welcome, and a short talk was given by the first president, Glenn A. Buck. The class history was read by Mrs. Dexter. A recognition was given to the past presidents who were present. Mrs. Dexter and Mrs. Backus read letters from Rev. and Mrs. Spencer B. Smith of Camp Hill, Pa., and from Rev. DeSmidt of Troy, N.Y., both former pastors of the Church. Rev. Warren Stone gave a tribute to the memory of Rev. John Young who was pastor of the Church when the class was organized and for the following eleven years. Harry L. Stone gave a tribute to the memory of George E. Bullis who was teacher of the class for eleven years. The benediction was given by Rev. Cecil Plumb.

Over the thirty-seven years the Mizpah Class has contributed generously to the Church and Sunday School programs and projects with money and time. At the present time the membership is not confined to married couples, but any one in the congregation is welcome to attend the monthly supper and meeting. The supper is followed by a religious thought, business meeting and program.

As is the way of the world, the young grow older and for the last few years our entertainment at monthly meetings has been of the less strenuous type. We have been arm chair travelers. Many speakers have given us illustrated talks of far-away places.

Quoting from the minutes of an early meeting: "All left for home feeling that these monthly meetings of the Mizpah Class have a place in our church life."

Ready for a Banquet

REV. THOMAS A. WEED

REV. JAMES P. STRATTON

REV. GEORGE BAYLESS

REV. ANTHONY N. PETERSEN, D.D.

REV. DAVID L. ROBERTS

REV. A. C. MANSON, D.D.

OVER THE YEARS

Rev. Simon Waterman*	1810—1814
Rev. Israel Brainard*	
Rev. Adams*	
Rev. Oliver Leavitt*	
Rev. Dunlap*	
Rev. David R. Dixon	1814—1830
Rev. Ralph Robinson*	1830—1831
Rev. Oliver N. Ayer*	1830
Rev. Alfred White*	1831
Rev. George Dunham*	1831
Rev. J. A. Hart*	1831—1833
Rev. Charles Bowles*	1833
Rev. David R. Dixon*	1835
Rev. William Blodgett*	1836—1837
Rev. John Eastman	1838—1839
Rev. Josiah Leonard	—1841
Rev. Russell Whitney*	1842—1844

Rev. I
Rev. F
Rev. T
Rev. J
Rev. J
Rev. C
Rev. A
Rev. I
Rev. A
Rev. J
Rev. L
Rev. S
Rev. C
Rev. C
Rev. M
Rev. I

*Supp

OVER THIS PULPIT

Rev. Daniel VanKenburgh*	1845—1846
Rev. Henry Parker*	1846—1847
Rev. Thomas A. Weed	1847—1870
Rev. James P. Stratton	1870—1877
Rev. John A. Lewis	1879—1881
Rev. George Bayless	1881—1903
Rev. Anthony N. Petersen, D.D.	1903—1907
Rev. David L. Roberts	1907—1919
Rev. A. C. Manson, D.D.	1919—1920
Rev. John Young, D.D.	1920—1933
Rev. Leon S. DeSmidt	1933—1936
Rev. Spencer B. Smith	1937—1941
Rev. Cecil Plumb	1942—1949
Rev. Charles E. Terry	1949—1952
Rev. Max R. House	1953—1957
Rev. Donald G. Roth	1958—

*Supply

Rev. John Young, D.D.

Rev. Leon S. DeSmidt

Rev. Spencer B. Smith

Rev. Cecil Plumb

Rev. Charles E. Terry

Rev. Max R. House

THE WOMEN'S FEDERATION

Mrs. Donald Dunn

A History of The Missionary Society

THE EARLY RECORDS of the Missionary Society are very incomplete. However strange it may seem to us of the Twentieth Century, this society was first composed of men.

During the pastorate of the Rev. David Dixon, the old record reads thus: Feb. 1828—"about six months ago this church resolved itself into a Missionary Society, Foreign and Domestic. A Constitution was adopted by which it was agreed that it is the duty of each member of the church to do something each year for Foreign and Domestic Missions. The officers of this church were made the officers of the Society with the authority of associating others as collectors." At this meeting it was resolved that the collectors (whose names were recorded) should collect of the females. It was once recorded that the females had collected $11.70. It is not known from what sources the so-called females procured the funds—whether from their husbands or from extra weaving and spinning.

According to the secretary's book, in May 1864, a Ladies' Benevolent Society was organized which is believed to be an outgrowth of the Sewing Circle. Any lady might become a member by paying one dollar, and a sewing member by paying 50 cents or its equivalent in something that the society needed. Every member absent or who sewed for herself should pay 5 cents.

An annual meeting was held in 1871 and the members are listed as "*sewing members*" and "*honorary members*." Mrs. James Stratton is recorded as president, Mrs. D.W. C. Peck, vice-president; Mrs. John M. Hood, secretary; and Mrs. J.C. Taylor, treasurer. According to the constitution, the society was to meet in homes but "in case no place is mentioned, the secretary shall appoint the meeting in the Lecture Room of the Church." Also according to the constitution: "the entertainment shall consist simply of bread or biscuits, butter, tea, one kind plain cake, one kind sauce. Cold meat, pickles, cheese, discretionary." In the year 1871, $20.75 was collected in cash subscriptions. They had carried over from the previous year $29.29, making a total of $50.04; "Expended for materials for work (sewing for a missionary) and freight and express charges $49.82, leaving a balance of 22 cents. They also sent a box of clothing and bedding valued at $96.23 to a Home Missionary in Greenfield, Illinois, and a barrel of clothing valued at $35.00 to Home for the Friendless in New York City, one small box valued at $31.34 to a Home Missionary in Rolla, Missouri. No mention is made of any expenditures for the local church or community.

In 1872 another organization was formed called the "Ladies' Church Improvement Society." Apparently they had no specific meeting date but met "on call from the president." Their function was as the title suggests.

After a suspension of three years the Benevolent Society again began work in 1875. Membership fees were collected. Dime socials and Strawberry and Ice Cream Festivals were held for the benefit of the Society. In 1878 it was decided that "all aid sent to Home Missions should be in money instead of making garments as formerly and sending them." In the same year an entertainment was given by the Society at the new Town Hall at which the net receipts were $26.75.

In 1881 the Society became auxiliary to the Syracuse Presbyterial Society, sending funds directly to the parent society, the Ladies Board of Home and Foreign Missions, New York City; a new constitution was adopted and the name changed to Ladies' Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church of Mexico. Officers consisted of president, vice president, secretary and treasurer, and six directresses.

In 1882 it was voted to give up the semi-monthly sewing meetings. Instead they held monthly meetings of one hour each consisting of devotional, literary and business character. Meetings were to be opened with reading of Scripture, prayer and singing, two papers to be prepared and read—one on Home and one on Foreign Missions after which necessary business should be transacted and the meeting closed by singing. Solicitors were appointed to call on each lady of the congregation and ask for contributions to the cause of missions. Meetings were held in the evening. The missionary publication was called "Our Mission Field" and was used as a basis for study.

We have no records from 1885 to 1899 but the treasurer's report of 1900 would indicate that an Aid Society had been formed during those years in addition to the Missionary Society. It is interesting to note the mention of the names of Vesta Green (Mrs. Collins), Alice Hardie, Fannie Johnson (Mrs. Glenn Buck), Grace Becker, Lena Severance, Anna Bard as taking part in the programs and work of the Society. The year 1900 saw the beginning of the monthly ten-cent suppers which were open to the public.

In the annual report of the Ladies' Missionary and Aid Society of 1902 we read, "Year after year as the harvest season comes and as we count the sheaves and review the work of each twelve months we are filled with mingled gratitude and regret. Gratitude that we have been given the privilege of doing so much good, and regret that our opportunities have not been more abundantly used."

In April, 1905, Mrs. Petersen expressed gratitude for the gift of a handsome silver coffee urn—donor unknown. (This was the gift of Mrs. Henry Hum-

The Executive Committee

Seated, left to right: Mrs. Metcalf Palmer, assistant secretary; Mrs. Richard Courtright, assistant treasurer; Mrs. Courtney Newstead, vice-president; Miss A. Arloine Backus, president; Mrs. Arthur Magnuson, secretary; Mrs. Clifton Tompkins, treasurer; Miss Marion Backus, overseas work secretary.

Standing, left to right: Mrs. Arthur Wright, program committee chairman; Mrs. R. Austin Backus, National Work secretary; Mrs. Edgar Wilmer, Social Education and Action secretary; Mrs. Earl Dexter, Literature secretary; Miss Bessie Everts, Spiritual Life and Stewardship chairman; Mrs. Harvey Allen, Church Work Department; Mrs. Willard Fetcha, Missionary Department chairman; Mrs. Jay Backus, Nominating committee; Mrs. Captain Boyd, program committee.

Fellowship Circle

LEADERS

Mrs. Donald Roth Mrs. Charles Aspinwall

Seated, left to right: Mrs. Donald Roth, Mrs. Daniel Miller, Mrs. Horace Backus, Mrs. John Mayne, Mrs. Charles Aspinwall.

Standing, left to right: Mrs. Courtney Newstead, Mrs. Willard Fetcha, Mrs. Arthur Magnuson, Mrs. Robert L. Brown.

Not present at time of picture: Mrs. Charles Ames, Miss A. Arloine Backus, Miss Marion Backus, Mrs. Allen Bailey, Miss Margaret Becker, Mrs. Charles Burdick, Mrs. John Castle, Mrs. Richard Courtright, Mrs. Charles Davis, Mrs. Douglas Eggleston, Mrs. Earl Everts, Mrs. John Forbes, Mrs. Virginia Fransecky, Mrs. Ann Fults, Mrs. William Hartwell, Mrs. Robert Jacobs, Mrs. Richard Jerrett, Mrs. Fred Jones, Mrs. Arden Klo, Mrs. Harsey Leonard Jr., Mrs. Charles Long, Miss Janice Mayne, Mrs. Russell McConnell, Mrs. Metcalf Palmer, Mrs. Paul Perlet, Miss Blanche Shumway, Mrs. William Shumway, Miss Dorothea Smithers, Mrs. William Smith, Mrs. Clifton Tompkins, Mrs. Everett Tracy, Miss Wilhma Willis, Mrs. Edward Zabo.

Loyalty Circle

LEADERS

Mrs. Donald Dunn Mrs. Harsey Leonard, Sr.

Seated, left to right: Mrs. George Brown, Mrs. Avery Dimon, Mrs. Floyd Jones, Mrs. Arthur Moore, Mrs. Donald Dunn, Mrs. Harsey Leonard, Sr., Mrs. Ernest Blanchard.

Standing, left to right: Mrs. Roland Wilcox, Mrs. Elmore Stone, Mrs. Kenneth Murphy, Mrs. Allen Vaughn, Mrs. Bradley Joice, Mrs. Harvey Allen.

Not present at time of picture: Mrs. Jay Backus, Miss Mary Boyd, Mrs. Guy Bradway, Mrs. Walter Burdick, Mrs. Fred Burgess, Miss Bessie Everts, Mrs. Frank Everts, Mrs. Harold Freeman, Mrs. Albert Griffiths, Mrs. James Hillick, Mrs. Walter Holbrook, Mrs. Frank Jones, Mrs. Wallace Mitchell, Mrs. Samuel Sade, Miss Elizabeth Simpson, Mrs. Alfred Smith, Mrs. Bradley Taylor, Mrs. Martin Willis, Mrs. Elwyn Ward.

Service Circle

LEADERS

Mrs. Edgar Wilmer Mrs. William Parthemore

Seated, left to right: Mrs. Glenn Buck, Mrs. Edgar Wilmer, Miss Arloine Backus, Mrs. William Parthemore, Mrs. Anthony Petersen, Mrs. Chandler Oakes.

Standing, left to right: Mrs. Jonas Tompkins, Mrs. Arthur Wright, Mrs. R. Austin Backus, Mrs. Harry Alnutt, Mrs. Captain Boyd, Mrs. Frederick Arthur, Mrs. Earl Dexter.

Not present at time of picture: Mrs. Harry Arthur, Mrs. Herbert Backus, Mrs. Raymond Blumer, Mrs. Ray Buck, Mrs. Ward Castle, Mrs. Harold Day, Mrs. Hadwen DeLong, Mrs. Sherman Fenner, Mrs. Wales Halsey, Mrs. Charles Holmes, Mrs. Edgar Hotaling, Mrs. Alma Larson, Mrs. Henry LeClair, Miss Alice Palmer, Miss Lillian Patterson, Mrs. Victor Parmenter, Mrs. Harry Stone, Mrs. Warren Stone, Mrs. Henry Trowbridge, Mrs. Earl Willis.

phries; it was re-silvered in 1956 and is now in use.) Mrs. Petersen was elected president in 1906, first record of "Praise Service." We are grateful to Mrs. Petersen for the leadership and guidance she has given over the years.

Music seemed to be a vital part of the programs during the early nineteen hundreds. There was nearly always a vocal solo and sometimes piano or violin solos as well. Fannie Johnson Buck has been our loyal and faithful pianist these many years. There were at least three or four outside speakers a year, usually missionaries from foreign service.

In 1912 a new committee was formed called the "Lookout Committee." Its function was to help in securing new members and to advance the interests of the society in every way. In 1913 we have the first mention of flower committees to provide flowers for Sunday morning church services.

In 1919 there were four circles: A, B, C. and D. Voted to double the contributions to Presbyterial. In 1920 the Society assumed the responsibility for the care and support of a girl in a Kentucky school and continued her support for several years.

In 1923 and '24 there seemed to be great concern regarding the Missionary effort. Special prayers were offered for the continuation of this work. Mexico entertained the Presbyterial Society in 1926.

In the early 1930's there is mention of sending delegates to Silver Bay. The ladies of the Missionary Society called themselves "Mystery Mothers" and adopted a girl in the church for a year and revealed their identity at the Mother-Daughter Banquet. Also during these years study classes were held with the Presbyterian churches in Oswego.

In 1934 Mrs. Collins reported that of 30 churches belonging to the Syracuse Presbyterial only six met their quota. We not only met ours, but went over the top. Nineteen members attended Presbyterial that year. Also in 1934 the Centennial of the Missionary Society was observed. Mr. DeSmidt gave history as gleaned from record books. "All That I Remember About The Last Hundred Years," was a paper prepared and given by Miss Elizabeth Simpson. Mention is made of the use of a collection plate given to the Society as a memento from the Ella Baker Estate. In 1935 is it noted that the clock in the ladies' parlor was given by Mrs. N. M. Pierce.

In 1938 the Aid and Missionary Societies merged under the new name of Women's Federation with three circles. Mrs. Collins, Mrs. E. C. Dexter and Mrs. Floyd Jones drew up the new constitution and Mrs. Dexter was the first president.

In 1939 a Spiritual Life Group was formed by the president, Mrs. H. K. Leonard. This group met for prayer for fifteen minutes prior to the regular Federation meeting. These meetings continued until about 1945.

In 1943 a fireplace set was purchased, also a $100 Defense Bond with money left by Miss Grace Spoor. A Flower Fund was also established in her memory but was not continued for long. In this same year Miss Lucy Wilson retired after 17 years of service as treasurer. It was also in this year that the officers of Syracuse Presbyterial came to Mexico and held a "Miniature Presbyterial Service" for the churches in this area as we were unable to travel much because of gas rationing.

In 1947 Mrs. Perley Wilcox gave a player piano for the Wilcox auditorium.

In May, 1949, the historical play written by Miss Elizabeth Simpson and Mrs. Willard Fetcha, "The Seven Who Started," was presented. This, of course, depicted the forming of the church by the seven women who met to form the society from which this church grew. All were thrilled at its presentation. *(See page 7.)*

In 1950 the ladies of the Federation purchased a new carpet for the church sanctuary. In 1951, under the leadership of Mrs. R. A. Backus, we had five circles, three afternoon and two evening. In this same year the Fellowship Circle adopted *KoMoonZa*, a Korean orphan, and continued her support until 1959 when she was able to leave the Home. Presbyterial Society again met here in Mexico.

In 1953 a Bible was presented to the Federation by Mrs. Harlow Fuller in memory of her sister, Marion Stanton.

From 1953 to 1957 yearly budgets of $1100 were adopted and fulfilled, more than half of this amount being used for work outside our own church. Memorial gifts in the form of scholarships for young people going into Christian Education work have been given in memory of Miss Lucy A. Wilson, Mrs. W. G. Collins, Miss Lena Severance, Mrs. S. T. Stanton, and Miss Mary Dempster.

In 1957 the Syracuse and Cayuga Presbyterial Societies merged and Mrs. E. C. Dexter was appointed vice president (Chairman of the Northern Area) for a term of 2 years. Mrs. R. A. Backus was a member of the first nominating committee.

Looking back over the years we find that many women have given long and faithful service to the women's organizations of this church. Space does not permit us to list all of them in this history.

Miss Simpson, in her history of the organization, given in 1934, paid special tribute "to the executive power, devoted services, and really fatal persuasive powers of your present president, Vesta Hayes Green Collins." We can think of no more fitting way to close this history than with a quotation from the devotionals given by Mrs. Collins at the Centennial meeting in September, 1934. "It is a great asset to have a wonderful background. We have a rich heritage—what are we doing with it?. What are we handing down? Is it something to tell in after years?"

CHURCH OFFICERS

The Session

Left to right:
Edgar J. Wilmer
Richard E. Courtright
J. Arthur Magnuson
Rev. Donald G. Roth
Guy E. Bradway
Horace A. Backus

not in picture:
Harsey K. Leonard, Sr.

Elders Who have Served

Seated, left to right:
Elmore B. Stone
R. Austin Backus
Harry L. Stone
Captain D. Boyd

Standing:
Victor Parmenter
Earl M. Everts
Earl C. Dexter
Stephen T. Stanton

Board of Trustees

Left to right:
Avery Dimon
Allen Bailey
Edgar Lydic
Willard Fetcha
Metcalf Palmer
Courtney G. Newstead
Elmore B. Stone

not in picture:
Donald A. Dunn
Raymond Bradway
Henry J. Phelps, Sr.

Board of Deacons

Left to right:
Sheldon K. Blank
Mrs. Arthur Magnuson
Mrs. Metcalf Palmer
Mrs. Virginia Fransecky
John H. Castle

not in picture:
Harsey K. Leonard, Jr.

Financial Secretary

MRS. KENNETH B. MURPHY

To hold the office of financial secretary of a church is a task that is not sought after. Perhaps this is one reason that Adelle C. Murphy has kept it so long. This is her fourteenth year at the job. But the better reason is that she has been so conscientious with it. If at times it has seemed to her that we have "left" her with the task, let us say here that we are thankful for another capable and willing person in our midst.

Church Treasurer

ALLEN BAILEY

THE CHOIR AND THE ORGAN

Mrs. Edgar Wilmer

Front row, left to right: Arloine Backus, Mrs. Donald Roth, Mrs. Donald Dunn, Barbara Newstead, Wilhma Willis. Middle row: Bessie Everts, Mrs. Courtney Newstead, Mrs. Richard Courtright, Mrs. Arthur Magnuson, Mrs. Samuel Sade. Back row: Douglas Courtright, Richard Courtright, Arthur Magnuson, Ernest Blanchard.

IF ONE HAD ENTERED our church on a Sunday morning in its early years, he would have found no choir and no musical instrument. Only a *precentor,* as he was called, to lead the singing. Clarke Beebe was the first such leader we know anything about. After the minister read the psalm or hymn, the leader announced the tune, sounded the key on a tuning fork, and all started singing, led by Mr. Beebe's good voice.

Next in our record we read of Elisha Bascom, a relative of the Stones, leading the singing. The good singers then seemed to be Wheelers, Mitchells and Stones.

Singing schools were popular in the community in those times. Many men with good voices came along through the years, held these schools in Mexico and nearby settlements, and greatly improved the quality of the singing in the churches. A Mr. Gilbert came in 1843. His training gave a few more people the courage to join the choir.

About this time, Mr. Hosford began playing a bass viol in church. In time his son, Ira, played a flute, his daughter took over the bass viol, and Mr. Hosford led the singing.

In 1848 the church was persuaded by a Mr. Camp, who had held singing schools for a couple of winters, to buy a seraphine. Mrs. John Midlam played this reed instrument.

Early in the 1850's Mr. Simon of New Haven sold the church a home pipe organ which was used for many years. Mrs. Matilda Penfield played this instrument for a while and Mr. J. P. Slack, who had moved into town became choristor. After a while, Charles Wheeler took up the task and carried it until one of the "boys," John Taylor, developed a strong bass voice. In an effort to interest some of the young people in the choir, he was chosen as director.

Another organ was purchased in 1863 which was said to be the "best in town." George T. Wheeler began to play it in the middle sixties and continued for fifteen years. Dr. David Becker, who had a good tenor voice, directed the choir during this time. His daughter helped out in the soprano section. Mr. Wheeler sang bass for many years after Addie Webb had taken his place at the organ.

Stebbins Orvis and his family came into the church in the early seventies. He possessed a beautiful tenor voice which he was happy to use whenever asked. He soon became leader of the choir. Julia and Grace Orvis also gave devoted help. When Mr. Orvis could no longer continue, Dr. Becker took over again. He was succeeded by Roderick A. Orvis who led until his death in 1912.

In 1879 the present organ was installed where it now stands. Addie Webb played the new organ for a while and was followed in 1883 by Fannie E. Becker. After she married Charles VanWie and moved away, Mary French played for a while as did Grace Becker also. People today remember and speak often of Mrs. Wm. McIntyre, who played for many years. She was the organist at the time of the Centennial celebration of the church. We find Anna Bard, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Becker, and Mr. Orvis had the longest record of service in the choir at that time. A sweet memory of Anna Bard's rich alto voice, given so freely for so many years, remains with us today.

This musical record thus far could not have been written without the help of an article prepared by Harry Stone for the Centennial book. He says his father, George W. Stone, told him most of it. Early Session records prove its authenticity.

In 1913 Mrs. McIntyre retired after many years and Mrs. David Roberts, the pastor's wife who was a talented musician, presided at the console until her husband left the church in 1919. Vernette Burdick took over for a while and Grace Becker also played again for a time.

When Roderick Orvis died in 1912, a musical chapter which had lasted over forty years in our church was closed. He was the last of this family which had contributed so much in song and leadership. Even today, almost fifty years since his death, people still quote his words of advice on the quality of music worth singing. The choir still sings many of the songs he selected.

The church was fortunate to have another man of unusual ability in Arthur Becker who led the choir until he and his family moved to Rochester. His wife, Grace, sang in the choir, and later his daughter, Margaret. Vesta Green, Alice Hardie, Mary, George, Charles and Harold Elkins also sang during this period.

A great improvement was made when the organ was electrified in the early twenties. Before that it had been hand pumped by some stalwart boy. Many of our men have vivid memories of helping out at this chore. Most of them left their names on the wall in the organ loft for posterity.

About 1922, Mrs. Glenn Buck (the former little Fannie Johnson who had been growing up through the years and playing the organ often for Sunday School) was asked to be church organist. During these years Mrs. Buck was living in the country and couldn't be present in bad weather. She had several substitutes but when possible she was there, bringing her little girls, Grace and Margaret, along to sit in one of the front pews where she could keep an eye on them. Both girls took their places in the choir later on.

For some time no regular director seemed to be available until Henry White came to the Mexico School as a teacher of Agriculture. His clear tenor voice soon made him sought after for musical events. From the January 4, 1925, Session minutes we read, "Mr. E. C. Dexter was appointed to secure, if possible, the services of Prof. White to lead the choir." Mr. White accepted but apparently there were problems connected with the choir. From the May 22, 1925, minutes: "A motion was made to instruct the treasurer to pay one dollar into the choir fund for a paid choir. A motion was also made that the music committee be instructed to establish a quartet in place of the volunteer choir." Henry White, Hubert Mott, Dr. Lindsley, and Glenn Buck made up the quartet.

Fannie Buck has devoted her life to the music of this church. As a little girl, her name appears again and again in our records as playing for Sunday School, Vespers, prayer meetings, etc. She played on as she became a young woman, bride, mother and grandmother. These years of service have been a source of great pleasure for her and the congregation.

BESSIE M. EVERTS

Directing a volunteer choir today is not an easy task with so many other activities to call, but somehow Bessie manages to do it. The church is deeply grateful to her for her patience, loyalty and perseverance during these twenty-three years of devoted service.

Leeta Fellows (now Mrs. Rynearson) who had graduated from Ithaca Conservatory of Music, came over from the Methodist church to lead the choir when Mr. White moved away in 1928.

In 1932-33 Mrs. Edgar Wilmer was leader. The choir was first robed during this time. The ladies of the Aid Society, under the direction of Mrs. Ray Buck, made them of black material with white collars at a cost of $2.17 apiece. There was much discussion about caps. It wasn't considered proper at that time to wear the gowns alone. But it was finally decided to break with Presbyterian tradition and *not* wear the caps. James Morrow, Orville Sampson, George Bullis, Walter Burdick and Dr. Lindsley helped out in the men's section. Mrs. Herbert Farley earned the nickname "Hefty" because of her strong alto voice. Zintzmaster, Robinson, Bossard, Dexter, Willis, Stone, LeClair and Munger were some of the names on the girls' robes.

Estelle Tarbrake, music instructor in the school, led the choir briefly in 1934. And for the next two years Mrs. Donald Dunn directed a group of young women. It fell to Mrs. Dunn to arrange the music for the 125th Anniversary celebration.

Our present director, Miss Bessie Everts, began to work with us in 1937. She was well qualified with her Bachelor of Music degree from Syracuse University. Bessie conducted the cantata at the first Easter Sunrise Service held in our church on March 28, 1937, at 5:30 A.M. This was a new musical venture started in the Methodist Church by George Kellogg. The chorus was composed of the choirs of all the Protestant churches in town. These cantatas, rotated from year to year between the Methodist and Presbyterian churches, proved to be the musical highlight of the community for many years. People filled the churches in spite of the early hour, and singers and directors received much praise.

Bessie started other "firsts" in our church. All leaders before this time had sat sedately with the choir on Sunday morning hoping instructions for singing the anthem would be remembered. All felt that the results would be better if the leader could face the singers, but no one was quite sure that such "arm-waving" in church would be correct. Eventually she stood in front of the choir loft and directed as she does today. By this time it was accepted practice in other churches too.

In 1939 new black robes with white collars were purchased for the choir and were used the first time on Christmas Eve of that year.

The organ was again rebuilt in 1951 by the heirs of George and Frances Bowen French as a memorial to them and their children, Julia, Mary, and Fred. The chimes, and the system for playing them through the church tower, were added by Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Dexter at the same time.

Of those in the choir today, Arloine Backus has sung the longest, starting in the late twenties. Wilhma Willis and Gladys Wilmer came in a little later. Dorothy Stone joined in 1933 and Mildred Jones about 1937. Sheldon K. Blank, the man who built the Mexico Academy and Central School Band into an organization that is the pride of the whole town, has been with us since he came here in 1946.

The names of all those who have given their gift of song should be mentioned, but they are many and space and research are limited. Most church members with talent have at least helped out on special occasions and many boys and girls have been with us during high school days and still come back to join with us when they return from college or homes away.

Sunrise Choir—Sunday, March 28, 1948

THE DAY THE CEILING FELL IN!

Rev. Charles E. Terry

It has often been the experience of pastors to have a person say, "If I come to church the roof will cave in." As the pastor of the Mexico Church I saw this actually happen in the winter of 1950.

On a Thursday afternoon Cliff Tompkins knocked at the door of the manse and upon my greeting calmly stated, "Pastor, the church roof has just collapsed." He was one who was known for his subtle wit and humor and I could not feel that this was anything but a humorous way to tell me he had been in the church to deliver some tables which had been constructed for use in the Sunday School. I was soon to discover that it was no joke.

The sight which met our eyes as we surveyed the scene is almost impossible to describe. It was as though an earthquake had struck. A chandelier was wrapped around the pulpit. Huge chunks of ceiling had completely demolished the pews in the very spot where a number of children sat each Sunday during a children's sermon. The weight of the debris was so heavy that the floor of the sanctuary gave way and a major supporting beam rested on a furnace. Only a few hours before, Charles Parkhurst, the sexton, had stood under the very spot to get the furnace ready for a fire to heat the church on Sunday. White plaster dust was everywhere.

It is true that calm, unexcitable Cliff Tompkins, who was not known for weekly church attendance, chanced to look in the door when he was delivering tables and calmly turned to his helpers, without any display of emotion, and dryly said, "I knew this would happen when I came to church." Actually, over the years, four different plaster ceilings had been put up with no attempt made to remove what was already in place. The theory behind the collapse is that the vibration of a snow plough, passing outside, caused a beam to turn slightly and loosened those four ceilings, thus bringing the collapse. Engineers told us that this same thing could have happened on the following Sunday from the vibrations of the bass notes on the organ. By the providence of God a possible tragedy was transformed into a blessing for no one was hurt and the people were drawn together as never before in meeting this challenge.

The entire town rallied to our support. The Methodist Pastor, Merle Brown, cancelled a trip with a group of boys so that he and the boys might spend all day Saturday helping remove the rubble. Others also helped—and many sent in contributions of money for the restoration fund.

As the pastor I wanted the restoration to be a church affair and not the gift of a few individuals. In seeking this objective I did some things which might have made me extremely unpopular had the people known what I was doing. The actions have never been reported before. I immediately wrote to Mr. Perley Wilcox, in the strictest confidence, and asked him not to contribute one cent to the Restoration Fund. I thanked him for the Wilcox Memorial Building which had been erected some years before and told him that since we could use this building as a temporary place of worship, his contributions had already been made. I explained that I wanted this to be a congregational effort.

Mr. Wilcox immediately wrote to say that he would comply with my wishes and told me that it was so refreshing to receive a letter at such a time asking that he would refrain from contributing. He fully expected a request for a large contribution. It was both amusing and frightening to hear people talk who knew Mr. Wilcox well. They were sure he would come through with a large contribution in his own good time. I knew he would not and wondered what would happen to me if they knew what I had done.

Another action concerns Austin Backus. I went to see him personally and told him that I knew he was capable of making a large gift but asked that his gift be not out of proportion to what others might give. He asked me how much I thought it should be and since our estimated need was $25,000.00, I told him, "not

more than $1,000.00." He immediately wrote a check. While he continued to contribute much through other reduced costs in his various business enterprises, that was the last direct cash contribution he made.

I am certain that both of these men were criticized on occasion for not giving more when they could have done so without difficulty. Both men were doing what they did at my request and in the long run rendering a more valuable service to a wonderful congregation.

The people worked hard with various projects and sacrificial giving so that in two years the entire debt was removed and the church restored. We held a very successful auction. Donald Dunn contributed a car and Charles Backus served as auctioneer. Stephen Stanton headed up the committee to collect the materials to be sold. How well I remember his jovial spirit as he and a gang of workers rode around town on the back of a truck.

Charles Backus proved an able auctioneer and even though the money was for a good cause, I am not sure I can forgive him yet for getting me to run my bid for a case of oil to a price higher than I would have paid at the most expensive station in town! Even when I bought it I didn't know how to put it in my car and I ended up giving it away.

Good folk from all over the area, regardless of denomination, sent us small gifts. Our story got into *Presbyterian Life* and a good doctor from Tunkhannock, Pa., sent us a gift of $25.00. Former members of our church who had moved from our community did not forget us and children gave their pennies. The Sade boys sold punch on the sidewalk in front of their home and contributed 89 cents to the cause.

Through all of these efforts our church rose to meet a challenge, and God in action—using the best audio-visual technique possible, experience— brought a somewhat complacent congregation to a point where they were dedicated and zealous in a new and richer way than ever before. A possible tragedy was transformed into the richest kind of blessing.

The Manse

This house, on the northwest Corner of South Jefferson and Spring Streets, was given to the church for use as a manse by Mr. Luzerne Wilcox, father of Perley S. Wilcox. Mr. Wilcox lived here until his death in July, 1929. His death occurred on his 86th birthday. Mrs. Wilcox died in 1916 at the age of 74.

Rev. Roth and family
in the Manse living room

Rev. Roth graduated from Forty Fort Junior-Senior High School, Forty Fort, Pa, received his B.A. degree from Bloomfield College, and B.D. from Bloomfield Seminary, Bloomfield, New Jersey. Before coming to Mexico he served as student assistant pastor in the Third Reformed Church, Hackensack, N. J., and student pastor of the Hawley, Bethany, and Cold Spring-Rileyville Presbyterian Churches in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Mrs. Roth is the former Carol Ann Goldberg, graduated from Clifton High School, Clifton, New Jersey, and Paterson General Hospital School of Nursing, Paterson, New Jersey.

The center of attraction here, as anywhere, is little Suzanne Roth, born August 9, 1959.

A view of the old manse on Spring Street, two doors from Lincoln Avenue. Dr. John Young was the pastor when the new manse was acquired. It is now the home of Mrs. Eber Salley.

WE ARE GRATEFUL

DR. AND MRS. WARREN S. STONE spent their childhood in Mexico, New York, and on becoming adults were away from the home town for many years. Dr. Stone retired from the ministry and returned to our village in June 1943.

Dr. and Mrs. Stone are living in the house on Spring Street in which he was born. Dr. Stone's father was Edward T. Stone, his mother was Henrietta Elizabeth Stone and known to everyone as Nettie Stone. Mrs. Julia Hardie Stone often mentions houses in Mexico in which she lived as a child, or houses in which she went to private school. Over the years Dr. and Mrs. Stone have been able to pass on to us much of Mexico history.

On October 16, 1953, Dr. and Mrs. Warren S. Stone celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. The congregation of the First Presbyterian Church were happy to join with them and their family in this celebration. The Stones have three daughters: Elizabeth (Mrs. Franklin Johnston) St. Albans, West Virginia; Charlotte (Mrs. Samuel Sade) Mexico, N.Y.; and Barbara (Mrs. Ralph Kekwick) Woodford Green, England.

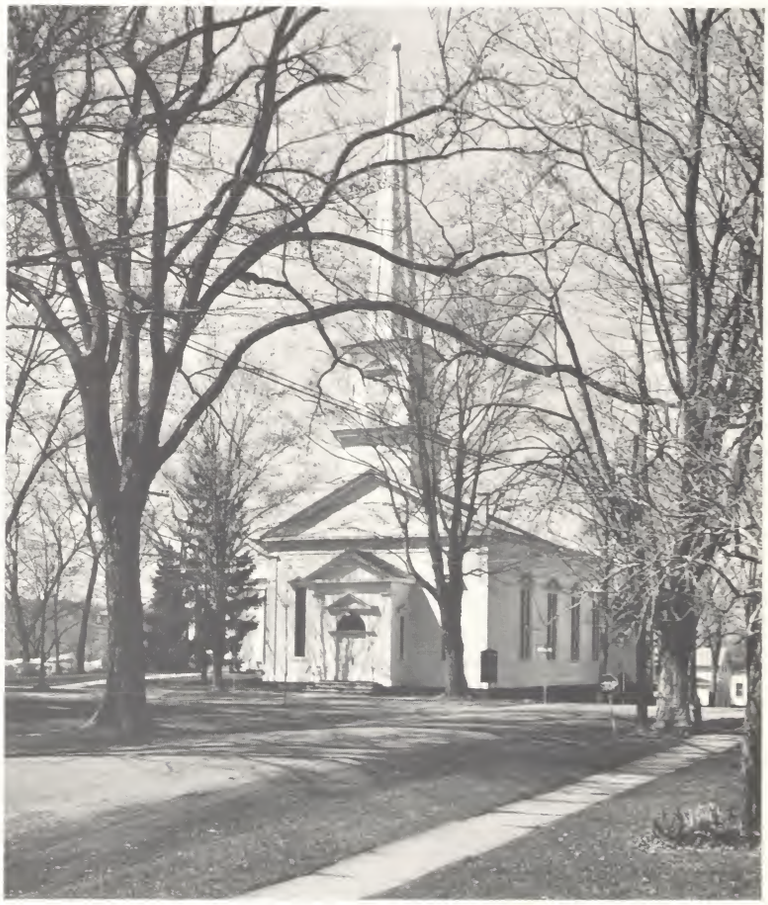
Dr. Stone has given invaluable service to this church. For fourteen years he served as church treasurer, retiring from the office December 31, 1959. At each annual meeting Dr. Stone always had a good report, always a balance, and always given with a twinkle in his eyes and a little pep talk. Through the years he has also served on committees, sang in the choir, and was happy to counsel with folks if advice was asked for. His help was most appreciated through periods when we were between pastors.

In this age of people moving about frequently, how very fortunate we are that Dr. and Mrs. Stone chose Mexico in which to retire and that we have their exemplified faith, their help and their company these many years. They are very dear to the hearts of all of us.

Custodians

DELL M. WAITE CHARLES GRAVES

1903



1960

The Committee would like to thank those who have taken the time to gather information, find and loan us pictures, and write the stories. Our thanks also to Mr. and Mrs. James Murphy of Murphy Photo Service for practically all the pictures, including the cover; and to The Morrill Press of Fulton, New York, for making it all available to us.